



Hieroglyphics: the NSU University School Literary Magazine

Volume 5 Messages

Article 36

5-1-1998

Destination (Part Two)

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Recommended Citation

Haynie, Katherine (1998) "Destination (Part Two)," *Hieroglyphics: the NSU University School Literary Magazine*: Vol. 5, Article 36.
Available at: http://nsuworks.nova.edu/uschool_litmag/vol5/iss1/36

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Destination (Part Two)

Katherine Haynie

In the center of the main room, there was a large round table covered in multicolored varieties of the nutritious, leafy gribble, garnished with sweet kelatose mints and candies. On the side, Calia spied a rare delicacy. "Oh look, lenta fruit!" We smiled at each other slyly as we piled the tender pink fruit on our plates, giggling as we pushed the green and orange gribble aside. With our plates full, we were looking for a table to sit at when I heard Tal call my name and then Calia's. I looked over my shoulder and saw his deep blue hair gleaming in the morning sun pouring through the skylight. Calia bounded over to the table in a few steps, and I followed behind. The three of us sat in the sunlight and enjoyed breakfast together, laughing and talking amidst the quiet murmur of the Centre as the people prepared for their day.

Late that afternoon, Tal, Calia, and I again sat in a circle, this time on the lawn outside the Centre Education Building, discussing the current topic for our debate class. I don't remember what the actual topic was, but somehow we strayed off of it into a philosophical battle. Tal and I were heatedly arguing over the concepts of independence, individuality, and self-determination. Calia sat back and watched us, trying not to get involved. Tal fiercely defended the Unitan's official stance: that people do not need to give up their individuality but that everyone must be dedicated to each other in order to survive. I insisted that the Unitan forced people to give up their individuality, and brainwashed them into believing that this was for the good of the whole. Independence was compromised for complacency, and self-determination was forgotten. Choice was obsolete, and people were now only colorful machines in a collective routine. At some point, Tal gave up on me, exasperated by my recalcitrance. I was upset by then, and Calia had retired to a spot of grass in the shade. Tal went back into the Education Building, his cheeks glowing with frustration. I walked over and sat down next to Calia. I could tell by the look in her warm, golden eyes that she understood what I was saying. She was the only one in the whole commune who did. "He thinks I'm crazy,

doesn't he?" I asked her.

"He only thinks what everyone else does. He believes in this place, he loves it, and he can't understand why you don't, too." She looked at me as she said this, trying to calm me down a little. I looked away, and gazed out over the blue forest in the distance. I couldn't look at her now. She knew what I wanted to do, and the look in her eyes begged me to reconsider. I turned to her quickly.

"Won't you come with me? The time is coming. Everyone here is growing tired of my constant aggravation, and I will have to leave soon. We could do well together out there; we could make our own life. We don't need them, Calia, and we can prove it to them. Come with me. It will hardly be worth it to go alone." She sat silently on the grass, staring at the crimson blades beneath her feet and refused to look at me. I knew she would react that way; I don't know why I thought asking her again would make any difference. We sat quietly in the afternoon shade for a while, avoiding each other's eyes. I hated these moments. She and I agreed on nearly everything but this, and every time the subject came up it tore my heart to pieces. I knew she wanted to go with me. She had the same desires as I did, but I guess she never felt them as strongly as I. I watched the sun slowly fall in the distance and the Alpha moon rise above her shoulder. As I observed her silhouette against the turquoise and lavender sky, I knew she would get by without me. She had always been the stronger one, and she had Tal. Someday they would have a family, and I knew that was what she wanted. But I didn't.

I captured the image of her in that moment to hold onto in my mind. I had to accept that I could never convince her to go with me. This was a journey I would make alone. Looking at her, feeling my heart aching, my resolve broke for a moment, and I almost wanted to stay here with her. I told myself that I could tough it out for a while; the Unitan wasn't so bad. But yes, it was. I would never be happy here. They called me a rebel, they pushed me as far away as they could without actually exiling me, yet they would deny it all. All because I wanted something different than they did! I didn't belong here, and I never would.

(to be continued...)